

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
White River Field Office
73544 Hwy 64
Meeker, CO 81641

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

NUMBER: CO-110-2004-078-EA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER (optional): COC67626

PROJECT NAME: Repeater Station

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Sixth Principal Meridian, Colorado
T. 1 S., R. 103 W.,
Sec. 3, lot 9-11, 14.

APPLICANT: EnCana Gathering Services (USA) Inc.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Background/Introduction: EnCana has applied for a right-of-way for a repeater station.

Proposed Action: The proposed action is for placement of a repeater station on a plugged and abandoned well pad (9-3-15-3). The repeater will be 12 feet tall and take up approximately 5 square feet. The repeater consists of a rubber tire filled with cement with a metal pole stuck in the middle. This facility will be rolled into place. The facility is described with a base of a 36" rubber tire, 10" thick filled with cement that holds a 12 foot mast made of 2" galvanized conduit. The mast holds two directional antennas that are 900 mega hertz each. Power will be supplied by a 12 volt car battery housed in a square box. There will be no new surface disturbance. The right-of-way term will be for 30 years.

No Action Alternative: The no action alternative would deny the application and the applicant would have to find another site.

NEED FOR THE ACTION: The repeater is needed to provide communications between the Hay Canyon compressor site and various metering facilities.

PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW: The Proposed Action is subject to and has been reviewed for conformance with the following plan (43 CFR 1610.5, BLM 1617.3):

Name of Plan: White River Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP).

Date Approved: July 1, 1997

Decision Number/Page: 2-49 thru 2-52

Decision Language: “To make public lands available for the siting of public and private facilities through the issuance of applicable land use authorizations, in a manner that provides for reasonable protection of other resource values”.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES / MITIGATION MEASURES:

STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC LAND HEALTH: In January 1997, Colorado Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approved the Standards for Public Land Health. These standards cover upland soils, riparian systems, plant and animal communities, threatened and endangered species, and water quality. Standards describe conditions needed to sustain public land health and relate to all uses of the public lands. Because a standard exists for these five categories, a finding must be made for each of them in an environmental analysis. These findings are located in specific elements listed below:

CRITICAL ELEMENTS

AIR QUALITY

Affected Environment: There are no special designation air sheds or non-attainment areas nearby that would be affected by the proposed action. During periods of low precipitation, air quality in the area of the proposed action is often diminished by dust caused by human disturbance.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The proposed action would result in short term, local impacts to air quality during and after construction, due to dust being blown into the air. After adequate vegetation is reestablished, blowing dust should return to pre-construction levels.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No increase in dust will occur.

Mitigation: None.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: The location for the repeater station has been inventoried at the Class III (100% pedestrian) level (Baker 1989, Compliance Dated 9/28/1989). Four sites were identified in the original Chandler and Associates well pad location. The original stipulation was for avoidance of the sites.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Unless there is new ground disturbance there will be no new impacts to the existing cultural resources.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: there would be no impacts to cultural resources under the No Action Alternative.

Mitigation: Original conditions of approval for the Chandler SWRF 9-3-1S0103 well called for avoidance of all cultural resources. That stipulation should be carried forward for this action. 1. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:

- whether the materials appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places
- the mitigation measures the operator will likely have to undertake before the site can be used (assuming in situ preservation is not necessary)
- a timeframe for the AO to complete an expedited review under 36 CFR 800-11 to confirm, through the State Historic Preservation Officer, that the findings of the AO are correct and that mitigation is appropriate.

If the operator wishes, at any time, to relocate activities to avoid the expense of mitigation and/or the delays associated with this process, the AO will assume responsibility for whatever recordation and stabilization of the exposed materials may be required. Otherwise, the operator will be responsible for mitigation cost. The AO will provide technical and procedural guidelines for the conduct of mitigation. Upon verification from the AO that the required mitigation has been completed, the operator will then be allowed to resume construction.

2. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g) the holder of this authorization must notify the AO, by telephone, with written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), you must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES

Affected Environment: Project site is a well pad that has been plugged and abandoned. This well pad has been reclaimed with not-native grass species. There are no known noxious weed species on this well pad.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Surface disturbance will be minimal and would not affect current reclamation. There is the possibility that during placement

of the repeater of during maintenance that noxious weed seed could be transported onto the site. With prompt control of any weed species that were to establish on site there would be no impacts to the adjacent plant communities.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts.

Mitigation: From the White River ROD/RMP, Appendix D; COA 179. Application of herbicides must be under field supervision of an EPA-certified pesticide applicator. Herbicides must be registered by the EPA and application proposals must be approved by the BLM.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Affected Environment: Non-game populations associated with these ranges are widespread and common throughout sagebrush and pinyon-juniper habitats in this Resource Area (e.g., green-tailed and spotted towhee, vesper and lark sparrows). There are no specialized or narrowly endemic species known to occupy the project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: None.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigation: None.

WASTES, HAZARDOUS OR SOLID

Affected Environment: There are no known hazardous or other solid wastes on the subject lands. No hazardous materials are known to have been used, stored or disposed of at this site.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: No listed or extremely hazardous materials in excess of threshold quantities are proposed for use in this project. While commercial preparations of fuels and lubricants proposed for use may contain some hazardous constituents, they would be stored, used and transported in a manner consistent with applicable laws, and the generation of hazardous wastes would not be anticipated.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: No hazardous or other solid wastes would be generated under the no action alternative.

Mitigation: The operator shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by this project.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS NOT PRESENT OR NOT AFFECTED:

No flood plains, riparian or wetland systems, prime and unique farmlands, or Wild and Scenic Rivers exist within the area affected by the proposed action. Impacts water quality are not

anticipated; currently water quality meets the Land Health Standards and would continue to meet the standard as a result of the proposed action. The Public Land Health Standard for wetland or riparian systems is not applicable to this action, since neither the proposed or no-action alternative would have any influence on riparian habitats. There is no reasonable likelihood that the proposed action or no action alternative would have an influence on the condition or function of Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive plant species. Thus, there would be no effect on achieving the land health standard. There are also no Native American religious or environmental justice concerns associated with the proposed action.

NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS

The following elements **must** be addressed due to the involvement of Standards for Public Land Health:

SOILS (includes a finding on Standard 1)

Affected Environment: The soils have been mapped in an order III soil survey by NRCS and are available from the office for review. Refer to the table below for the type of soils affected by the proposed action.

Soil Number	Soil Name	Soil pH	Permeability	Water Capacity	Run Off	Erosion Potential	Range site	Slope
73	Rentsac channery loam	6.6-8.4	2.0-6.0	0.12-0.16	Rapid	Moderate to very high	Pinyon-Juniper woodlands	5-50%

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Short-term impacts would be expected from any surface disturbing activity. Impacts from the proposed action would be loss of the protective vegetation cover, possible increase in salt and sedimentation during storm events and soil compaction from trenching equipment. These impacts could continue until successful re-vegetation has occurred. Re-establishing vegetation as soon as possible would be favorable to control any erosion problems that may occur.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: In the no-action alternative, neither the surface disturbance nor the impacts to soils resources would occur.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for upland soils: The proposed action will not affect the soil type's ability to meet the Land Health Standard.

VEGETATION (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: The project site is an abandoned well pad with a cover of non-native grass species as specified by reclamation. Over time this well pad is expected to develop into pinyon/juniper woodland.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: Maintenance of the facility will keep the area vehicles used free of vegetation. Once this facility is abandoned plant density will increase to cover the areas trampled by vehicles.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: There would be no change from the existing situation.

Mitigation: None

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlife, Terrestrial): The project area meets the standard for healthy plant communities.

WILDLIFE, AQUATIC (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: There is no aquatic wildlife within this project area.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: None.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Terrestrial): There is no aquatic wildlife within this project area. Thus, this standard is not applicable.

WILDLIFE, TERRESTRIAL (includes a finding on Standard 3)

Affected Environment: This project occurs in normal winter range for mule deer. It occupies 5 square feet on an abandoned well pad and will represent no new surface disturbance.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: None.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None.

Mitigation: None.

Finding on the Public Land Health Standard for plant and animal communities (partial, see also Vegetation and Wildlife, Aquatic): This project would not jeopardize the viability of any animal population. It would have no significant consequence on terrestrial habitat condition, utility, or function, nor have any discernible affect on animal abundance or distribution at any landscape scale. This public land health standard will thus be met.

OTHER NON-CRITICAL ELEMENTS: For the following elements, those brought forward for analysis will be formatted as shown above.

Non-Critical Element	NA or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Applicable & Present and Brought Forward for Analysis
Access and Transportation		X	
Cadastral Survey	X		
Fire Management	X		
Forest Management	X		
Geology and Minerals	X		
Hydrology/Water Rights	X		
Law Enforcement		X	
Paleontology		X	
Rangeland Management		X	
Realty Authorizations	X		
Recreation		X	
Socio-Economics		X	
Visual Resources			X
Wild Horses	X		

VISUAL RESOURCES

Affected Environment: This project is on an existing disturbed area, next to an existing facility and is in a Visual Resource Management Class 4 area. The object of this class is to provide for management activities which require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of the viewers attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action: The objectives of VRM Class 4 will be met.

Environmental Consequences of the No Action Alternative: None

Mitigation: None

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS SUMMARY: No cumulative impacts were identified. Cumulative impacts from oil and gas development were analyzed in the White River Resource Area Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS) completed in June 1996. Current development, including the proposed action, has not exceeded the cumulative impacts from the foreseeable development analyzed in the PRMP/FEIS.

PERSONS / AGENCIES CONSULTED:

INTERDISCIPLINARY REVIEW:

Name	Title	Area of Responsibility
Caroline Hollowed	Hydrologist	Air Quality
Tamara Meagley	NRS	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
Tamara Meagley	NRS	Threatened and Endangered Plant Species
Michael Selle	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources Paleontological Resources
Robert Fowler	Forester	Invasive, Non-Native Species
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife biologist	Migratory Birds
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife biologist	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Animal Species, Wildlife
Marty O'Mara	Hazmat Collateral	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
Caroline Hollowed	Hydrologist	Water Quality, Surface and Ground Hydrology and Water Rights
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife biologist	Wetlands and Riparian Zones
Chris Ham	ORP	Wilderness
Caroline Hollowed	Hydrologist	Soils
Robert Fowler	Forester	Vegetation
Ed Hollowed	Wildlife biologist	Wildlife Terrestrial and Aquatic
Chris Ham	ORP	Access and Transportation
Ken Holsinger	Natural Resource Specialist	Fire Management
Robert Fowler	Forester	Forest Management
Paul Daggett	Mining Engineer	Geology and Minerals
Robert Fowler	Forester	Rangeland Management
Penny Brown	Realty Specialist	Realty Authorizations
Chris Ham	ORP	Recreation
Chris Ham	ORP	Visual Resources
Valerie Dobrich	NRS	Wild Horses

Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record (FONSI/DR)

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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)/RATIONALE: The environmental assessment and analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action have been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures (listed below) result in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION/RATIONALE: It is my decision to approve the proposed action with the mitigation measures listed below.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. Original conditions of approval for the Chandler SWRF 9-3-1S0103 well called for avoidance of all cultural resources. That stipulation shall be carried forward for this action.
2. The operator is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing historic or archaeological sites, or for collecting artifacts. If historic or archaeological materials are uncovered during any project or construction activities, the operator is to immediately stop activities in the immediate area of the find that might further disturb such materials, and immediately contact the authorized officer (AO). Within five working days the AO will inform the operator as to:
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must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer.

4. From the White River ROD/RMP of 1997, Appendix D; Application of herbicides must be under field supervision of an EPA-certified pesticide applicator. Herbicides must be registered by the EPA and application proposals must be approved by the BLM.

5. The operator shall be required to collect and properly dispose of any solid wastes generated by this project.

COMPLIANCE/MONITORING: Compliance will be conducted by the realty staff every five years.

NAME OF PREPARER: Penny Brown

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Caroline P. Holbourn 5/21/04

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL: Theresa R. Hall
Acting Field Manager

DATE SIGNED: 5/21/04

ATTACHMENTS: Map of the Location of the Proposed Action.